UNITED NATIONS

# Daily Highlights

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## T U E S D A Y  H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council approves position of Force Commander for UNPREDEP; authorizes 50 additional military personnel.

* Secretary-General welcomes decision in Sierra Leone to keep 26 February as date for presidential and legislative elections.

* Cooperation between United Nations and regional organizations a growth industry, according to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

* Urban farming helps hundreds of millions of city-dwellers worldwide combat poverty and malnutrition, according to UNDP report.

* Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy should set targets for global action, says its Chairman.

* Financing of Habitat II preparations had not affected programmes of United Nations Centre for Human Settlements according to Secretary-General of Conference.

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The Security Council today approved the position of Force Commander for the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In unanimously adopting resolution 1046 (1996), the Council authorized 50 additional military personnel to ensure UNPREDEP has continued engineering capability during its current mandate, which expires on 30 May. The Secretary-General was asked to submit, by 20 May, further recommendations on the Force's composition, strength and mandate.

The Secretary-General had recommended that UNPREDEP, formerly under the command and control of the United Nations Peace Forces Headquarters (UNPF-HQ) in the former Yugoslavia, be established as an independent mission, reporting directly to United Nations Headquarters in New York.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was very pleased to learn that the National Consultative Conference on Elections in Sierra Leone had decided

(more)

**For information media—not an official record**

overwhelmingly to maintain 26 February as the date for Presidential and legislative elections, a United Nations spokesman said today. The Secretary-General commended the Government and the Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council, and Head of State, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for their commitment to the democratic process.

The Secretary-General called on the Provisional Council, the Interim National Electoral Commission and the political parties to work together to fully implement the decision of the Consultative Conference. He emphasized the importance of the NPRC ensuring the safety and security of voters, polling stations and electoral workers.

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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the fields of peace and security is a growth industry, according to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding. He told correspondents today, that the growing reluctance by Member States to finance major United Nations peace-keeping operations raised the question of whether more could be done on the preventive side and whether more peace-keeping could be sub-contracted to regional organizations. A second meeting between the United Nations and the heads of 13 regional organizations on 15 and 16 February will examine peace-making and peace-keeping, as well as preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building.

Mr. Goulding said the meeting would focus on finding new, practical and more effective ways of working together. The five main areas of cooperation were: consultation, which had been going on a long time; diplomatic support; the new field of operational support; co-deployment as for example in Georgia, where the UN worked with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); and joint operations like the one in Haiti with the Organization of American States (OAS). There had been enormous and striking progress in developing operational cooperation between the United Nations and the North Atlantic Organization (NATO) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he continued. Despite political differences, two organizations with totally different mandates and philosophies -- one dedicated to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the other a military organization created to win wars -- had worked together with great operational success.

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Food produced in garbage dumps, vacant lots and on rooftops is helping to lift hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty and is improving the health and nutrition of city-dwellers, according to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). There are 800 million urban farmers in both developed and developing countries, particularly in Asia, who grow crops on their rooftops, keep livestock in backyards and raise fish in streams and ponds. The sector provides food for the extreme poor, income and low-cost,

high-quality food for the "stable poor" and savings and a return on investment in urban property for middle-income families.

According to the report, Governments and the international community have misunderstood and underrated the potential of urban agriculture, which could become a formidable economic force in the next century. It is a competitive economic activity and the industry of choice for millions of urban entrepreneurs. It also provides income-generating opportunities for people with low skills and little capital, as well as those with limited mobility, including women, children and the aged.

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The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development should not hesitate to set targets for global action as Governments and international agencies considered its reports closely, Chairman, E.V.R. Sastry, said yesterday. The Committee might think about suggesting concrete actions within the United Nations itself, he added. The Committee, whose expert members are nominated by governments and elected by the Social and Economic Council, began a two-week session yesterday. It also addresses energy issues contained in Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Nitin Desai, said the United Nations financial crisis had directly affected the Committee's work, and postponing the current session for a year had been considered. However, it was the only body which considered all aspects of energy issues and there was a need to bring expert opinion to bear on political decision-making in the area of sustainable development.

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The programme of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) had not suffered because it had advanced some available funds to finance preparations for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), according to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Wally N'Dow. In a statement today, Mr. N'Dow said all agencies with conferences to run had made similar contributions from their resources. The Centre was the Secretariat for the Conference and had made it a high priority programme and activity, contributing funds openly and transparently. Already, $500,000 had been paid back.

Mr. N'Dow said the General Assembly had voted $7 million to finance Habitat I in 1976 compared with $1.7 million for Habitat II which was a fraction of the Conference's cost. However, an additional $23 million had been mobilized and 96 per cent of the resources needed for Habitat II would come from external sources.

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